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Skinner comment period winding down

By Lisa Loveless-Manz
Pulse-Journal Reporter

Anyone wanting to put in his or her two cents about the cleanup of the Skinner Landfill off Cincinnati-Dayton Road has just a few more days to do so.

The 30-day public comment period, which began June 9 after the Remedial Action Consent Decree was filed with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), will end Sunday.

The decree is an agreement among the U.S. government, the site owners and 13 companies held primarily responsible for the cleanup of the 78-acre landfill, which was a dump for all types of wastes between 1934 and 1990. It requires the companies held responsible for the cleanup pay for and manage the cleanup, to include a hazardous waste cap over the landfill and ground water control and monitoring, and pay for EPA's cost in monitoring the cleanup.

Within the past few weeks, and up until Sunday, the public has been invited to comment on the more than 2,000-page consent decree by submitting written comments to the U.S. Dept. of Justice, c/o Assistant Attorney General, Environment and Natural Resources Division, Washington, D.C., 20530.

While it sounds simple, for some there have been problems.

Beth Hauer, West Chester resident and member of the environmental group CLEAN, said she had difficulty locating a copy of the decree to review.

She said phone calls requesting copies did not pro-

duce one and she was unable to locate the decree at any libraries or on the Internet.

When she received a copy courtesy of West Chester Township, she expressed concern over the manageability of the massive technical document for the average person.

She said she felt the decree was too general, and did not specifically indicate what the cleanup would include.

"The EPA has been screwing us around from day one, and they're not going to stop now," she said.

Susan Pastor said the EPA has made every effort to make the information available to the public. "We've made it as easy for people as we can."

Though she said a copy of the decree had been sent to the public library in West Chester, employees at the library Monday were not able to verify that the document was there.

Pastor also indicated the decree was accessible on the EPA's Web site, but it was not available Monday.

She later said the link had been accidentally removed and would be reestablished.

The site is www.epa.gov/region5/sites, then scroll down to Skinner Landfill.

As Pastor stated, a copy was sent to the township and is available for public perusal.

She said she did not anticipate the Department of Justice's final approval to take very long. If the decree is approved in a timely fashion, cleanup could begin next spring. "I really don't think the decree will change (after the public comment period)," she said.

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